

Children's Health

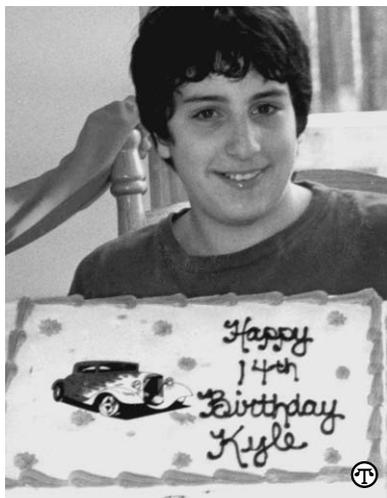
Protecting Children From The Harmful And Deadly Effects Of Inhalants

(NAPSA)—Parents who think they are doing everything they can to protect their children from drugs may not be aware of all the dangers found right in their own homes. More than 1,400 common household products are currently being abused by kids across the country to get high.

Inhalants are easily accessible, legal, everyday products. When used as intended, these products are completely harmless and have a useful purpose in our lives, but when intentionally misused and abused, they can be deadly. Most parents and educators are in the dark regarding the popularity and dangers of inhalant abuse, and unfortunately, the practice is becoming more common and accepted among children.

According to national surveys, inhalant abuse is on the rise, and poses a tremendous threat to all those who engage in the practice. By the time a student reaches the 8th grade, one in five will have abused inhalants and more than 2 million kids aged 12-17 will have used some form of inhalant to get high.

A recent case that illustrates the grave dangers associated with inhalant abuse is that of Police Officer Jeff Williams of Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Williams repeatedly warned his children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, and despite owning a retired police K-9 trained and certified in drug detection, he was uninformed on the issue and wasn't aware of the warning signs. His 14-year-old son



Fourteen-year-old Kyle Williams died tragically due to inhalant abuse.

Kyle had a bright future and was about as normal and healthy as any parent would want their son to be, until he died suddenly after deliberately inhaling a computer keyboard cleaner to get high. What Kyle didn't know is that inhalant abuse can be more than a cheap high, it can kill—whether the first time you try it, the second or the tenth.

“March 2nd was the one-year anniversary of my son Kyle's death,” said Officer Williams. “I'm a cop—I knew what to watch for when it came to drugs and alcohol, but with this, I didn't recognize the signs, and that's the problem. Parents have to know what to look for—if you don't know, you can't stop it.”

The death of Kyle and the similar deaths of many other children across the country are the reasons that the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition developed National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW). An annual community-level program that takes place in the third week in March, NIPAW is designed to increase understanding about the use and risks of inhalant abuse. Program partners have included sponsors from state government agencies and associations, medical groups, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, police departments, DARE officers, the National Guard, PTO/PTA chapters, Poison Control Centers, local medical communities and the media.

This year, Jeff Williams is honoring his son's memory by helping to educate people about the dangers and warning signs associated with inhalant abuse. His goal is to help prevent other families from experiencing what he and his family have endured.

“Nothing I can do can bring Kyle back, but what I can do is help other families avoid suffering the same pain and loss that my family did. Parents need to understand that education is the key in helping prevent inhalant abuse in their household and communicating the dangers to their loved ones,” concluded Officer Williams.

The NIPAW campaign can be conducted anywhere there is a need for inhalant awareness education. For more information, please visit www.inhalants.com.